

REMARKS

Claims 10-35 were pending in the application. Of these, Claims 17, 21, and 26-28 have been canceled and new claims 36-38 have been added by way of this Response.

Applicant has amended FIGS 5 and 6 to correct an inadvertent typographical error that was discovered. (This is the same change that was made in the related application.

Specifically, it was noted that the front-most yarns were erroneously illustrated as crossing over each other across the width of the fabric. Also, FIGS 8, 9, and 10 have been amended to delete the numerals noted by the Examiner as being missing from the specification. Also new FIG 11 has been added to illustrate the curved joints set forth in claims 24, 32 and 33, and the specification on p. 15, lines 17-21. All of the drawing corrections (including the new figure) are believed to be fully supported by the originally-filed application. It is respectfully requested that the amended drawings be entered into the application.

The specification was objected to because of several typographical errors. (Specifically, the Examiner noted that on p. 7, line 5, "210" should be "110, and on page 16, line 20, "pattern" should be "illustrated in FIG." These requested edits have been made by way of this Response, and it is therefore believed that these objections have been obviated.

The specification was objected to as failing to provide a proper antecedent basis for the terms "non-inflating portion" (claims 23 and 24), "regions of yarn entanglement (claim 25), "second seams [that] form a seam along said joining" (claim 26) and "a total of between about four and about eight first yarns between successive joints or the first/second layer structure" (claim 35.) The term "non-inflating portion" has been deleted from Claims 23 and 24. The term "entanglement" has been deleted and replaced with the terminology "interlacement". Support for this wording is provided on p. 17, line 24 of the application. Claim 26 has been modified to delete the offending language. Applicant respectfully disagrees with the characterization that the specification fails to describe the airbag as having a total of between about four and about eight first yarns between successive joints for the first/second layer structure. Support for this

feature is found on p. 15, lines 14-17, which disclose that a preferred form of the invention utilizes about two to four yarns in each layer (one of ordinary skill in the art being able to appreciate that two to four yarns in each of two layers provides four to eight yarns.) Therefore, it is respectfully requested that the rejections be withdrawn.

Claims 23, 24, and 26-28 were objected to for formalities. These formalities have been corrected as requested by the Examiner.

Claims 10-17, 21, 22 and 24-25 were rejected under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Claim 17 has been canceled. Claim 22 has been amended to delete the "essentially independent " language. Claim 24 has been amended to delete the directional language. The remainder of the claims have been amended to remove offending language or to amend in accordance with the Examiner's proposals. With respect to Claim 32, it is noted that the use of jacquard and plain weave in the same claim is not inconsistent. Plain weave refers to the weave pattern in the area between the joints. Therefore, it is believed that all of these rejections have been obviated.

Claims 10-12, 14, 15, 18, 19, 22, 25-29, 31, 33 and 34 are rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Buchner et al (US 3,792,873). The Buchner patent illustrates a bag formed by joining inflatable tubular fabric sections together with joints to form a structure. It is noted that the joints shown in the Buchner reference are woven into a single layer. In contrast, the airbag of the instant invention has two distinct layers of fabric disposed between at least two closely spaced joints, with the joints being formed by swapping yarns from one layer to the other and vice versa, rather than by weaving a single layer. Reference to Buchner Fig. 4 clearly illustrates yarn 24 from the top layer and yarn 25 from the bottom layer interweaving around common yarns 23 to form a single layer. Therefore, Buchner fails to anticipate, or even disclose or suggest, Applicant's claimed invention. Therefore, it is respectfully requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 13, 16, 17, 20, 24, 30, 32 and 35 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being

obvious over Buchner et al. The Examiner acknowledged that Buchner lacks joints separated by no more than four yarns. However, the rejection contended that it would have been obvious to reduce the separation of the joints to no more than four yarns in order to reduce the size of the inflatable areas between joints. Applicant respectfully disagrees. As noted, the seam of the invention is formed by a plurality of closely spaced joints made by crossing yarns from one layer to the other, with two distinct layers of fabric between the joints. However, Buchner clearly illustrates that his yarns at the seams stay on the same side of his structure. Therefore, Buchner fails to disclose or suggest the claimed invention.

Claims 21 and 23 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being obvious over Buchner et al. in view of Thornton et al. Thornton is similar to Buchner in that it utilizes joints that are woven in a single layer. In contrast, the instant invention utilizes two distinct layers of fabric disposed between two closely spaced joints, with the joints being formed by swapping yarns from one layer to the other and vice versa, but without weaving the fabric into a single layer with yarns in common with both layers along the joint. Therefore, it is respectfully requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

Applicants respectfully submit that the claims are in condition for allowance, and a notice to that effect is earnestly solicited. Should the Examiner find that any issues remain outstanding following consideration of this Response, he is invited to telephone the undersigned in the interest of resolving such matters in an expedient manner.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sara M. Current", with a long, sweeping flourish extending from the end of the signature.

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ANNOTATED, MARKED-UP DRAWINGS

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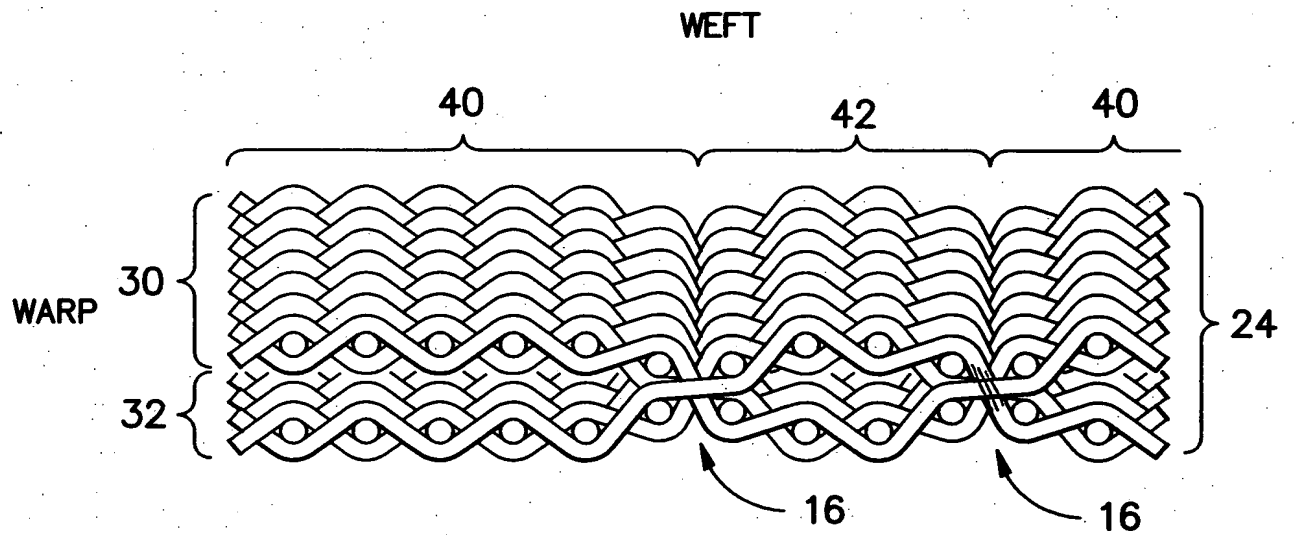


FIG. -5-

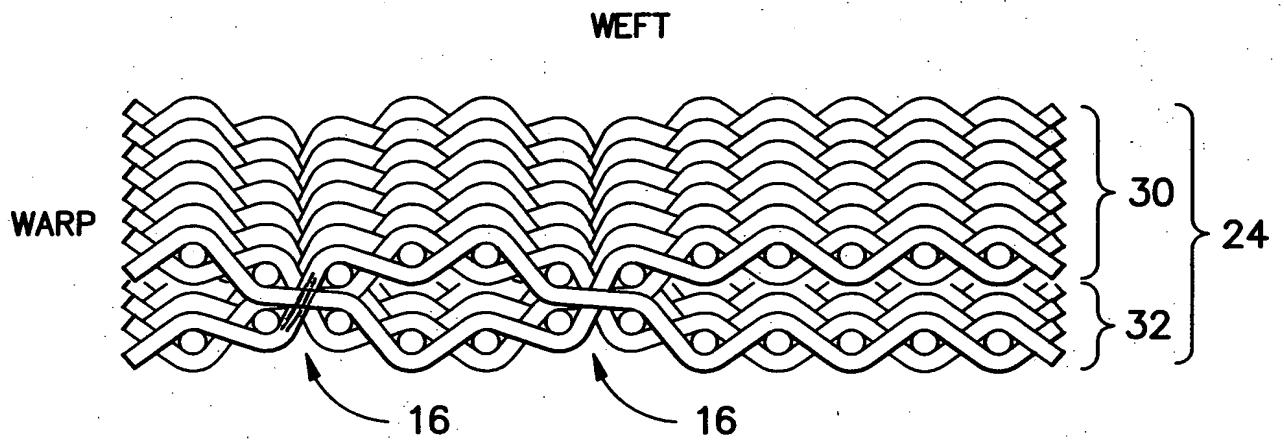


FIG. -6-

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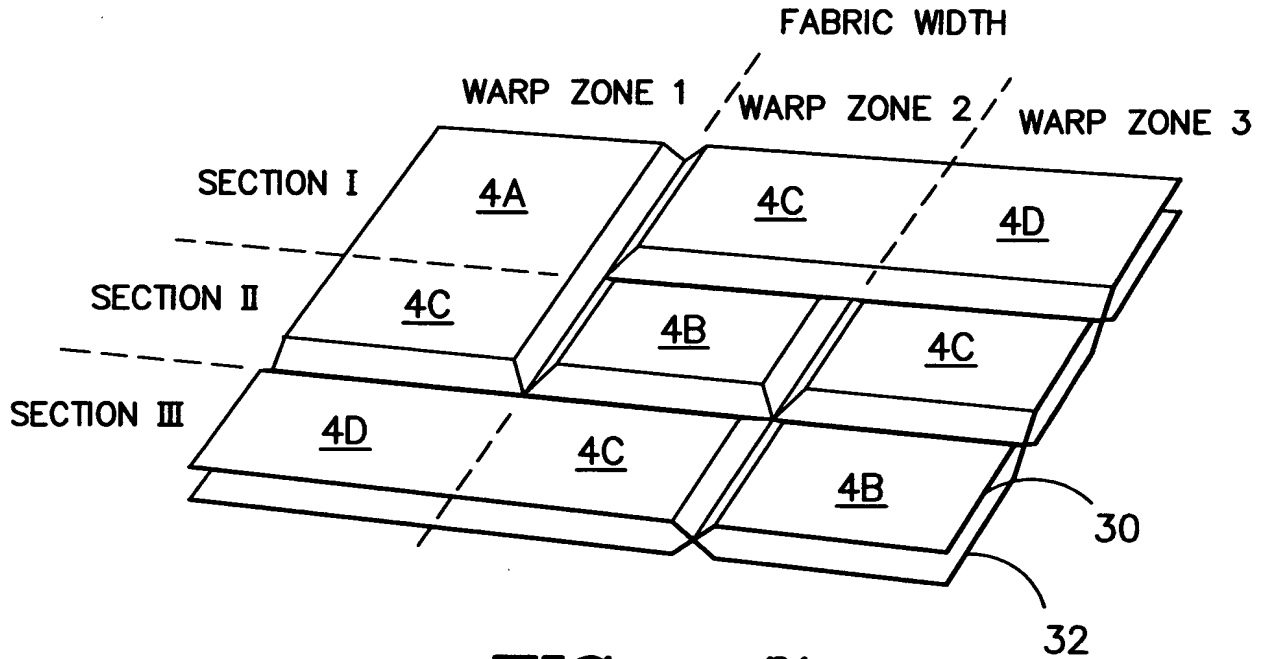


FIG. -7-

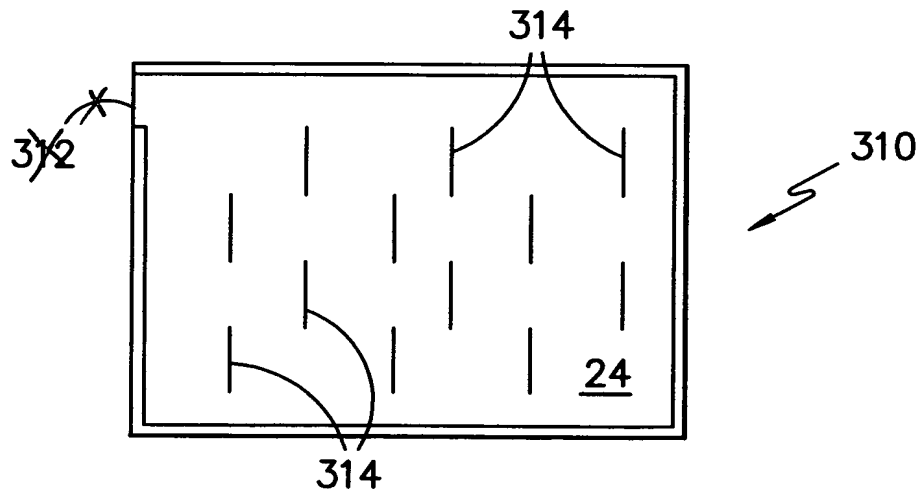


FIG. -8-

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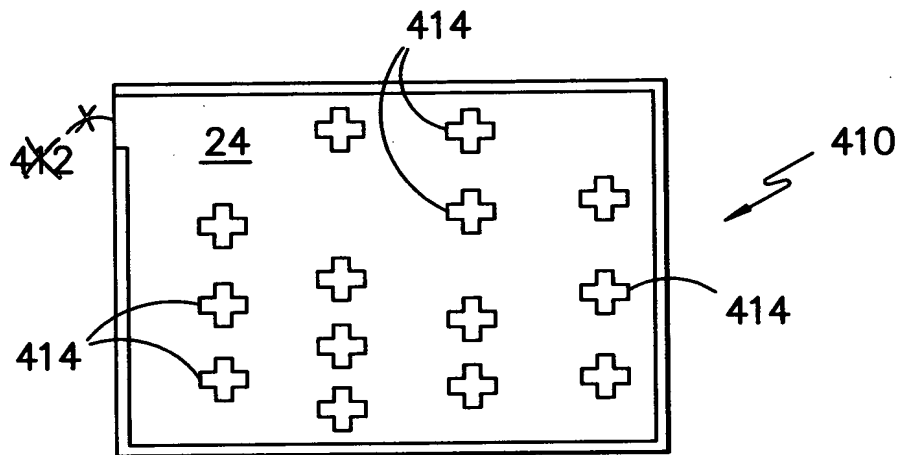


FIG. -9-

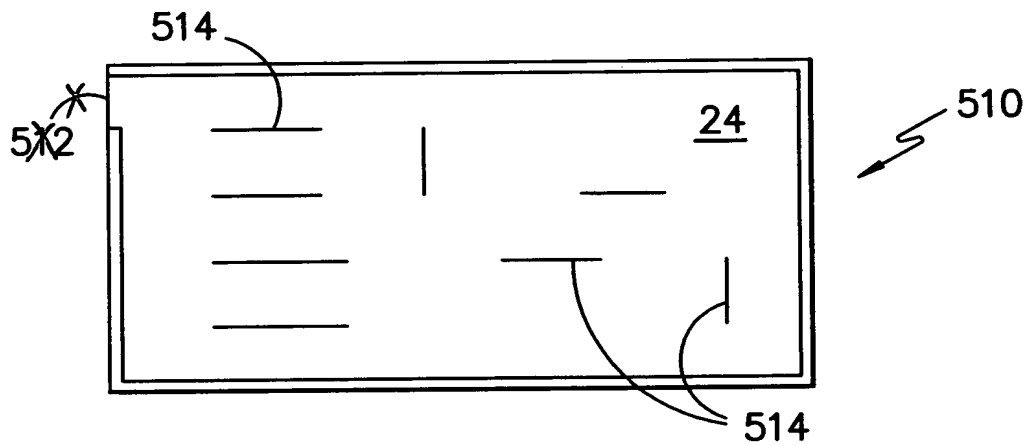


FIG. -10-